United Methodist Women
On a Path for Mission
United Methodist Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION
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INTRODUCTION
The work of United Methodist Women is focused on the mission set for us by Jesus Christ, as expressed through the PURPOSE and lived through our vision since our founding more than 140 years ago.

United Methodist Women is specifically charged to “support ministry with and advocate for the oppressed and dispossessed with special attention to the needs of women, children and youth” (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2012, ¶1319). The national office provides resources and opportunities for members to grow spiritually, develop as leaders and serve and work to improve the lives of women, children and youth nationally and internationally through advocacy and compassionate service.

This booklet provides information about United Methodist Women, how we are engaged in God’s mission through a variety of channels, and ways you can be a part of it. More information on all of these topics is available online at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org.

Mission or Missions?
Often those of us who are inside the church are confused when pastors and scholars of mission use the words “mission” and “missions” interchangeably…. [Theologian Lesslie] Newbigin’s distinction between “mission” and “missions” can be a working definition for our understanding: “Mission is the entire task for which the Church is sent into the world. By ‘missions’ I mean those specific activities undertaken by human decisions to bring the Gospel to places or situations where it is not heard, to create a Christian presence in a place or situations where there is no such presence or no effective presence.”

Mission, in short, is the goal and the purpose of God for us. Missions are the human objectives by which we respond to God’s love for us. God’s mission outlives individual and denominational missions. It does not end.

PURPOSE
The PURPOSE provides the foundation for the work and witness of United Methodist Women. These words give us reason for being an organization of laywomen mobilized for mission.

United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

VISION
Our vision sharpens and energizes the PURPOSE of United Methodist Women to remain vital in the years to come. Inspired by 1 Thessalonians 1:4, the vision describes a United Methodist Women organization that is

Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

HISTORY
United Methodist Women is founded on the work of the organization’s foremothers and women’s groups in the predecessor churches of The United Methodist Church. Information about our predecessor organizations can be found in the appendix.

The beginning of United Methodist Women can be traced to an 1869 meeting of eight women in Boston. They gathered to learn about women’s health and education needs in India from missionary wives on itineration there. These same eight women organized the Methodist Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society and sent two missionaries, Isabella Thoburn, an educator, and Clara Swain, a doctor, to India later that same year.

Women in the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren traditions organized at about the same time in history (1869-1893). Home missionary organizations worked to change situations for women and children within the country. There was little service to women during this time period because of prejudice and limitations of cultural attitudes in the church and in society.
The 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church approved actions from Women’s Division and the General Board of Global Ministries to make United Methodist Women an autonomous organization within the Church, separating the national policymaking body of women from Global Ministries for the first time in more than 70 years.

Since 1869 the organization has expanded from:
- Two missionaries in India to work in more than 100 countries.
- Three hundred dollars to millions of dollars for the program of United Methodist Women.
- Eight women to approximately 800,000 in membership.

SCOPE OF WORK
The work of United Methodist Women is mission, which is carried out through a variety of channels. As United Methodist Women members give voice to the unheard, raise up women leaders through education and leadership development and perform acts of service, they are engaged in mission.

Our funding comes from the local United Methodist Women organizations and everyday women. As giving increases, so can the places of our work.

What follows are brief descriptions of the many channels through which United Methodist Women members are engaged in mission.

Focus Areas for United Methodist Women
- Spiritual growth.
- Transformative education.
- Service and advocacy.
- Leadership development.
- Organizing for growth.
- Climate change.
- Domestic violence.
- Human trafficking.
- Immigration and global migration.

Spiritual Growth
Spiritual growth and theological development are at the core of United Methodist Women. We affirm The Book of Discipline, which says: “Lay members of The United Methodist Church are, by history and calling, active advocates of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every layperson is called to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); every layperson is called to be missional” (¶127). United Methodist Women equips and affirms laywomen to explore and articulate theology and their faith journey.

We provide a variety of resources and channels for this kind of study and growth:
- Annual spiritual growth studies (presented at Mission u).
- The United Methodist Women Bible.
- Bible studies in response magazine.
- Prayer Calendar.
- Program Book.
- Spiritual retreats.
**Transformative Education**
Mission education is important to deepen spiritual growth and understanding of how God is at work in the world. The inward work of spiritual growth increases the outward expression of mission. With this in mind, United Methodist Women provides many opportunities for mission education through events, programs and personal study.

**Mission u (formerly Schools of Christian Mission)**
Three mission topics are selected annually for these events, which are attended by more than 20,000 people each year. Mission u events take place across the country and are organized by the conference organizations of United Methodist Women, in some cases in partnership with conference boards of Global Ministries. They help participants increase their understanding of mission and prepare to lead the studies themselves in local or district settings.

**Reading Program**
Every year the United Methodist Women national organization recommends a diverse range of books to broaden exposure to a variety of concepts. They are organized into the following categories:
- Education for mission.
- Nurturing for community.
- Social action.
- Spiritual growth.
- Leadership development.

**Seminar Program on National and International Affairs (Seminar Program)**
The Seminar Program on National and International Affairs allows a group to study complex social issues from a perspective of faith. Some examples of seminar topics include economic justice, human trafficking, immigration, environmental justice and human rights. This program enables participants to acquire a global education in light of biblical and theological reflections.

**National Seminar**
This quadrennial event equips United Methodist Women members to renew their commitment to know God and to join in the local and global mission of justice and advocacy through Bible studies, workshops, forums and service opportunities.

**Advocacy and Service**
Advocacy allows us to be agents of transformation by calling us to change the systems that exclude women, to eliminate barriers to women’s progress and to be proactive in our efforts. Compassionate service takes us to where the hurt and pain are and gives us a glimpse of God’s image in all God’s people.

**Christian Social Action**
United Methodist Women focuses on social issues that most affect women, children and youth. At this time, immigration, environment and climate change, domestic violence and human trafficking are special emphases for United Methodist Women.
- **Action Alerts** keep interested individuals informed about important legislation and policies regarding issues of concern for United Methodist Women and its members and encourage social action on these issues.
Church Center for the United Nations (CCUN) is owned by United Methodist Women and serves as a door of access for the denomination and for other non-governmental ecumenical and interfaith organizations to the United Nations. We work closely with Ecumenical Women to organize parallel events and host delegations, particularly for events like the annual Commission on the Status of Women.

Ministry Opportunities
A number of relationships are established nationally and internationally through the Section on Ministry Opportunities through grant and funding connections with partner organizations, deaconesses, home missioners and individuals. Grants and scholarships provided through Mission Giving offer scholarships, training, education, property resource, annual gifts and access to resources that put faith, hope and love in action around the world.

• National Mission Institutions: United Methodist Women, through members’ Mission Giving and service, supports nearly 100 National Mission Institutions across the United States, including Puerto Rico and St. Croix. They serve as community centers, women’s residences, residential treatment centers, schools, colleges and universities.

There are nearly 100 National Mission Institutions. They serve as community centers, women’s residences, treatment centers, colleges, schools and more.

• Office of Deaconess and Home Missioner: Consecrated and commissioned, deaconesses and home missioners commit as laity to a lifetime of professional vocation led by the Spirit of God in ministries of love, justice and service. Their ministry is to represent Christ in the world embodying the love and concern of the believing community for the needs of the world.

• Bible Women Program: The Bible Women Program brings leadership training and development to marginalized people in rural and urban areas. Women work with trainers to study the Bible, literacy, health, nutrition, economic development and women’s rights.

• Regional Missionary Initiative: Regional missionaries work in their assigned areas to assist women, children and youth. They work in solidarity with women in their regions on specific issues and develop projects and programs that meet their expressed needs and priorities. They also build relationships with Methodist, United Methodist, ecumenical and grass-roots programs that focus on the issues of health, gender, equality, elimination of violence against women and support for uprooted and marginalized people.

Where Regional Missionaries Serve
→ Sub-Saharan Africa.
→ Asia.
→ Latin America.
→ The Caribbean.

50 Years of Peacemaking at the Church Center for the United Nations

Following World War II and the Korean War, United Methodist Women recognized the need for a place to work on behalf of peace. Ideally, it was to be situated near the newly formed United Nations. The only parcel of land available sat directly across the street. In 1963, United Methodist Women dedicated the 13-story building it built and owned, naming it the Church Center for the United Nations. Five decades later it still stands, devoted to peacemaking.

“The building was the hub of activities of civil society, a source of inspiration, hope, determination and nourishment to continue the struggle,” recounted Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Bangladesh representative and recent Senior Special Advisor to the U.N. General Assembly President.

A tireless advocate for peace, women and children, he added, “We have to work together. We can’t think individually. This building is a symbol of a place where people come together.”

• **International Ministries**: United Methodist Women members’ giving supports projects and organizations worldwide that advocate with and for women, children and youth.

How are United Methodist Women’s international projects funded?

**Two ways:**

1. Some grants go directly to specific projects.
   These can include schools, hospitals, agricultural projects, youth networks and more.

2. Some grants go to Methodist Women’s Societies in other countries.
   This way, the women can make their own decisions about what projects in their own country need funding.
   They fund the same types of projects—schools, hospitals, networks, justice & advocacy initiatives, etc.

To help fund these projects and more, visit www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/Give

• **Ubuntu Journeys**: These short-term mission-learning opportunities give members of United Methodist Women opportunities to interact with the world through mission partners. On these journeys, women of faith come together through shared mission to address social issues and discover new ways of working together, supporting one another and growing spiritually.

• **Grants and Funding Opportunities**: A number of funding opportunities are available for national and international ministries and for the deaconess program for scholarships, training, education, property resourcing, annual gifts and access to resources.

**Leadership Development**

Leadership development is central to the mission of United Methodist Women. Opportunities are offered throughout the year for both interested individuals and the organization’s leaders. Check the United Methodist Women’s website for information on these opportunities.
Organized for Growth
United Methodist Women is organized to live out the PURPOSE. This means that different groups may be organized differently and that they may need to change their structure from time to time to encourage ministry and mission. Flexible structures give us the freedom to organize in ways that best fit our groups and best allow us to participate in God’s mission.

United Methodist Women, like The United Methodist Church, is connectional. The major relationships of United Methodist Women are through:
• The local organization.
• The district organization.
• The conference organization.
• The jurisdiction organization.
• The national organization.

Every level of the organization is involved in mission as members live out the PURPOSE of United Methodist Women.

Inviting members and leaders to consider the PURPOSE, to think about new ways to do the work of education, spiritual growth, leadership development, and connecting our service with our advocacy is what helps us to be a growing and fruitful organization—an organization for every woman of all races, ethnicities, cultures, first languages, economic status and generation who wants to be involved in mission.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT
Members are encouraged to reach out to others—welcoming all women—to invite them to join United Methodist Women, a place to nurture faith, experience and community and to engage in mission. The membership of United Methodist Women is voluntary and open to all women who are committed and engaged in mission and who affirm the PURPOSE. You don’t have to be a member of The United Methodist Church to be a member of United Methodist Women.

Benefits of Membership
United Methodist Women is a community of women committed to mission. As a member you can take advantage of many opportunities, including the following:
• Prayer, Bible studies and spiritual retreats.
• Hands-on mission in local communities.
• Mission education experiences.
• Leadership development and training opportunities.
• Supporting work with women, children and youth.
• Partnership with women in mission in the country and around the world.
• Advocacy for social justice issues, including those pertaining to the environment, domestic violence, immigration and the many other concerns that impact the lives of women, children and youth.
• Engagement in racial justice issues.

Office of Language Ministries
The program serves to promote leadership and mission engagement of United Methodist Women members whose primary or preferred language is other than English. Language Ministries translates resources into multiple languages and encourages educational materials such as Voices of Native American Women and Voices of Haitian Women and annually hosts Voices: A Transformative Leadership Event.
FUNDING THE MISSION

Mission Giving, which is mission money used for any part of our mission work, allows the work of United Methodist Women to reach far beyond the church walls and into the lives of women, children and youth who are often outside the bounds of our traditional ministries.

Pledge

Women prayerfully make financial pledges to their local organization or district each year. Their pledge offerings contribute to local mission, spiritual formation, programs for membership development and outreach in the community. For most members, making an offering to her unit’s Pledge to Mission is a way of supporting the organization and expressing her commitment to mission. However, a pledge or financial gift is not a prerequisite for membership.

The pledge journeys from the local to the district and then to the conference. The pledged amount designated for mission is sent to the national office and budgeted for ministries with women, children and youth.

Journey of your pledge:
Local → District → Conference → National → Mission work in the United States and around the world

Five Channels of Giving

Not all United Methodist Women members can travel the world, but their mission dollars can and do through the five channels of Mission Giving:

- Pledge to Mission.
- Special Mission Recognition.
- Gift to Mission.
- Gift in Memory.
- World Thank Offering.

Supplementary Giving

United Methodist Women members also give special offerings that support special grants, including the following:

- Brighter Future for Children and Youth.
- Call to Prayer and Self-Denial.

To learn more, talk to your treasurer or check out www.unitedmethodistwomen.org.

Major and Planned Giving

A member of United Methodist Women can ensure that the mission work she passionately cares about continues on by naming United Methodist Women in her will or using another approach to major or planned giving.

Major gifts are significant donations made on an occasional or one-time basis. Major gifts may be paid out over a period of years. A planned gift is often deferred, meaning that the gift, such as a bequest, life insurance policy, or pooled-income fund, is not available for the organization to use until a future time.

Giving Forward

Fifty years ago, Betty Prentice attended her first circle meeting of the Women’s Society of Christian Service at the invitation of a friend. It transformed her life.

“I kind of think I was just drawn” to the organization, Ms. Prentice says. “I don’t know if it was one person or all the ladies in my unit or the God-sized hole that I kept trying to fill, but I just always had the feeling that this is where I was supposed to be and this is what I was supposed to do.”

Attending her first United Methodist Women Assembly also opened her eyes to the worldwide scope of United Methodist Women’s work. Ms. Prentice says, “Seeing women from all over the United States as well as the world and getting to see and hear firsthand where your money goes ... well, sometimes it is surprising that Assembly doesn’t look or sound like your unit. It’s a time to just ‘take the blinders off’ and see more of the world. There’s more to United Methodist Women than just us.”

“The work we do is special,” Ms. Prentice declares. She knows that no organization other than United Methodist Women could have taught her so much and or filled her life so completely—or made such a difference for over a century in the lives of countless women, children and youth around the world. Just as Ms. Prentice embodies faith, hope and love in action during her lifetime, her legacy gift to United Methodist Women after her death will continue her faith, hope and love far into the future.

From an article by Sandy Wilder in the April 2013 United Methodist Women News.
**From Victim to Survivor**

Eva Gantuangco traveled from her home in the southern Philippines all the way to Manila, the country’s teeming capital city, to audition for a job as a singer and dancer in Japan. Yet she didn’t have to perform. “I just had to show up. I didn’t have to sing or dance, just look pretty,” said Ms. Gantuangco, who is the single mother of a small son.

“We are poor, and I needed to work for my child and my family. If I had stayed in the Philippines, I didn’t have any options,” she said.

Unlike many foreign women working as “entertainers” in Japan, Ms. Gantuangco says she wasn’t abused sexually. Still, she only got paid if she interacted with male customers in the club, and she had a quota of eight “dates” per month, when she would leave the club with customers who paid the club owner for her company.

“We could only leave on a date with a customer. We had no freedom. We were like sardines in a can,” she said. The police raided the club in 2010, and Ms. Gantuangco and her sister ended up in police custody. At that point, the Batis Center for Women, an organization supported by United Methodist Women Mission Giving, stepped in and took them to a shelter.

*From a story by Paul Jeffrey in the January 2013 issue of response.*

**Budget**

Decisions about budgets and giving are based on a strong belief in mission education, leadership development and the centrality of the needs of women, children and youth. The United Methodist Women’s budget is voted on and approved by a volunteer board of directors who are United Methodist Women members and elected from the jurisdiction organizations of United Methodist Women.

United Methodist Women National Office acts as a steward of United Methodist Women member’s Mission Giving, which is disbursed according to its budget. In addition, gifts specified for special projects are routed directly to the places for which they are designated. Pledges to mission and specific mission gifts are sent to the national office and fund the entire program of mission and leadership development.

**PLACE IN THE CHURCH**

United Methodist Women is an integral part of The United Methodist Church. It not only provides advocacy and service on behalf of women, children and youth but also takes a lead role in expanding concepts of mission for the whole church. A United Methodist Women conference president is a member of her annual conference and often serves on a variety of committees. The local organization president is a member of the church administrative council, and local United Methodist Women members often serve in a variety of ministries. Being a part of United Methodist Women gives members opportunities to receive training so that they are equipped to be leaders in their churches and communities.

Women have always banded together for the work of mission, and while the core of our work remains the same, the way we organize to best accomplish the tasks of mission has evolved.

**CONNECTION WORLDWIDE**

Mutuality is basic to the mission of United Methodist Women as we collaborate with organizations worldwide that address the condition of women, children and youth around the world. By working with other faith-based groups and groups that share concerns similar to United Methodist Women, we amplify what we are able to do to end oppression, discrimination, injustice, abuse and violence in the world.

We are connected to:
- Church Women United.
- Church World Service.
- The U.N. Commission on the Status of Women.
- Ecumenical Women.
- JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation.
- National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches.
- National Justice for Our Neighbors.
- United Methodist Committee on Relief.
- United Methodist Global AIDS Fund.
- World Day of Prayer.
- World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women.
- U.N. Women.
RESOURCES

Print and Downloadable Resources
United Methodist Women resources such as the response magazine, the Program Book, mission studies and other items can be ordered online at www.umwmissionresources.org. You can also contact the Mission Resource Center in the following ways:

Customer service: 800-305-9857
Customer service fax: 770-280-0061
E-mail: cs@umwmissionresources.org

Hours of operation: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST Monday through Friday

Address for sending payments:
United Methodist Women
P.O. Box 742349
Atlanta, GA 30374-2349

United Methodist Women on the Web
United Methodist Women website: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org
Here you will find the latest news and information about United Methodist Women members, programs and initiatives. You’ll also find promotional and educational items that can be downloaded as well as links to our other sites and mission resources e-store.

UMWOnline: www.umwonline.org
This is the social networking site for United Methodist Women. This is the place to connect one on one with other United Methodist Women members. Visit, set up your account, friend your sisters and begin networking for mission.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UMWomen
If you’re on Facebook, be sure to “like” United Methodist Women so that our posts will appear on your home page.

Twitter: www.twitter.com/UMWomen
Follow @UMWomen, tweet with us and become a part of the continuing conversation around faith, hope and love in action.

YouTube: www.youtube.com/UMWomen
Need a video for a presentation? You’ll find it on YouTube. Check out the video resources available at our YouTube page. New videos are posted often!

Flickr: www.flickr.com/UMWomen
Need a photo for your newsletter or PowerPoint? Follow this link and you’ll find terrific images illustrating the work of United Methodist Women members.

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/UMWomen
Pinterest is an online pinboard where you can collect and “pin” images, stories, videos and tips to keep and share with others. Organized by category, our Pinterest page is an easy way to obtain content and resources to use and share. You can find links to articles and images related to justice priorities, spiritual growth, infographics, and more.

For more information, call the United Methodist Women National Office: 212-870-3900.
APPENDIX: UNITED METHODIST WOMEN PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATIONS

Historical Chart of the United Methodist Women

1784–1939
Methodist Episcopal Church

1869 Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
1880 Woman's Home Missionary Society
1921 Wesleyan Service Guild
1904 Ladies’ Aid Societies

1829–1939
Methodist Protestant Church

1879 Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
1893 Woman's Home Missionary Society
1928 To become Woman's Convention of the Board of Missions

1939–1968
The Methodist Church

1939–1940 Women's Society of Christian Service (Wesleyan Service Guild, auxiliary to WSCS) administered by Woman's Division of the Board of Missions

1844–1939
Methodist Episcopal Church, South

1878 Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
1890 Woman's Home Missionary Society
1910 To become Woman's Missionary Council of the Board of Missions

1968
The United Methodist Church

1968 Women's Society of Christian Service and Wesleyan Service Guild administered by Woman's Division of the Board of Missions

relationship to various missionary societies
1800–1946
United Brethren in Christ

1875 Woman’s Missionary Association
1909 Administrative responsibilities merged with General Home and Foreign Service Missionary Societies

- Harford Circle (for businesswomen)
- Otterbien Circle (for young women)

1803–1922
Evangelical Association
United Evangelical Church

1922–1946
Evangelical Church

1884 Woman’s Missionary Society
- Christian Service Guild (for businesswomen)
- Young People’s Missionary Circle (prior to formation of EYF in 1942)

1946–1968
Evangelical United Brethren Church

1946 Women’s Society of World Service and Christian Service Guild combined to become in 1958 Women’s Society of World Service administered by Women’s Division of the Board of Missions

1973
United Methodist Women

Administered by Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries

2013
United Methodist Women

Agency of The United Methodist Church